

ALGER HISS . . .

plus 20



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"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union . . ." Thus begins the noble document upon which the American concept of limited government was established. For almost two centuries it withstood the ravages of time amazingly well permitting the age-old dream of self-government to become a reality in America. The citizens had met the responsibilities imposed upon them by the concept of self-government by selecting for high office, representatives whom they felt would best protect and preserve their Freedom. Those who had been entrusted by the people with the responsibilities of high office and the advisors and assistants they selected, for the most part, met their responsibilities with a high degree of dedication.

The scene of unity of purpose, of Freedom and prosperity, was an example that inspired and gave hope to countless millions of Freedom-loving people in other countries. It was a picture in which all Americans could justifiably take pride. By meeting the responsibilities of self-government, they had played an essential part in its creation.

The shattering blow fell without warning, stunning the American people. They looked on in shocked disbelief as a totally different kind of picture was gradually exposed.

In 1950 a New York jury found Alger Hiss "Guilty as Charged" on two counts of perjury, arising out of his denial that he had engaged in espionage for the Soviet Union. The case of Alger Hiss first came to light in 1948 when Whittaker Chambers testified in open hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Chamber's testimony helped expose to the American people that a vast network of regimented Communist agents had penetrated our Federal government. The positions of influence attained by some of the exposed agents were shocking.

ALGER HISS, fair-haired boy-wonder of the State Department had been: Director of Office of Special Affairs, Department of State; Secretary General at the founding of the United Nations Organization; special assistant to the Director, Office of Far Eastern Affairs; on the staff of the Solicitor General of the United States; counsel to the Senate Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry and assistant to the General Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.¹ **DONALD HISS**, Alger's younger brother, had been: assistant to the legal advisor in the Department of State; Assistant Solicitor, Department of Labor and an attorney in the Public Works Administration.² **JOHN J. ABT**: special assistant to the Attorney General; chief counsel, La Follette Civil Liberties Committee; special counsel, Securities and Exchange Commission; Assistant General Counsel, Works Progress Administration and attorney for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.³ **NATHAN WITT**: Assistant General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board; secretary of the National Labor Relations Board and attorney for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. **LEE PRESSMAN**: General Counsel, Works Progress Administration; General Counsel for the Resettlement Administration and Assistant General Counsel for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.⁵ **HENRY COLLINS, JR.**: National Recovery Administration; Soil Conservation Service; Labor Department; staff member, House Committee on Interstate Migration; Senate Committee on Small Business; Senate Sub-Committee on Technological Mobilization; entered military Government service as Captain and retired as Major; State Department, displaced persons program and Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees.⁶ **CHARLES KRAMER**: staff member, Senate Sub-committee on Wartime Health and Education; National Labor Relations Board; National Youth Administration; staff member, La Follette Civil Liberties Committee; staff member, Senate Committee on War Mobilization and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.⁷ **VICTOR PERLO**: Treasury Department, Division of Monetary Research; War Production Board on problems of military aircraft production; Commerce Department, economic

analysis; Office of Price Administration, Chief of the Statistical Analysis Branch; Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the National Recovery Administration.⁸ This elite group of conspirators were members of a cell headed by **HAROLD WARE**, a consultant to the Department of Agriculture.⁹ How many priceless American secrets they conveyed to Moscow will never be known. Testifying during the same open hearings as Chambers, was Elizabeth Bentley, who, for 11 years had been a courier in the Communist underground in America. From her personal knowledge and experience she revealed additional parts of an incredible picture of Communist espionage in America. Miss Bentley revealed that Victor Perlo, in addition to being a member of the Ware cell was the head of another communist spy ring known as the Perlo cell. She identified 7 other members of Perlo's cell who had held influential government posts. Elizabeth Bentley also exposed another communist spy ring in our government, known as the Silvermaster cell. This cell was headed by Nathan Gregory Silvermaster and included Lauchlin Currie, Virginus Frank Coe, William Ullman and 6 other less prominent conspirators, all of whom had attained positions in our government.¹⁰

Harry Dexter White¹¹ and Owen Lattimore,¹² both highly influential in governmental affairs were also identified as active agents, though not assigned to any specific cell. White in particular held an incredible number of official positions within the United States Treasury Department. Harry Dexter White was the official Treasury representative in the following: Interdepartmental Committee on Post-War Economic Problems; Executive Committee on Economic Foreign Policy; Interdepartmental Lend-Lease Committee; National Munitions Control Board; National Resources Committee and 13 other similar government committees.¹³

When the dust of the investigations had settled, Alger Hiss had been sent to prison for perjuring himself concerning his part in the espionage activities. It was only by virtue of the statute of limitations that he was able to escape prosecution on the espionage charge itself. Harry Dexter White was dead of a heart attack, suffered shortly before he was to be questioned again by the Investigating Committee. His heart attack, whether real or medically induced, ended the threat that he might tell all he knew. Lawrence Duggan, another prominent State Department official identified as a Communist agent, had either fallen, leaped or been thrown to his death out of his 16th floor office window. But not all those who were caught in the dragnet have fared badly. John Abt, a member of the Ware cell has become a well-known and much sought after attorney. His legal talents must be considerable, for his was the first name considered by Lee Harvey Oswald when he sought legal counsel after his capture in Dallas. Had Oswald lived, he would not have been the first Communist defended by Abt, whose practice consists in large part of representing Communists in court and before Congressional committees. It was John Abt who finally took over command of the Ware cell after the death of Ware.¹⁴ Abt also married the widow Ware, thus keeping her in the family so-to-speak.

"Solution in Asia," by Owen Lattimore, is a masterpiece of misinformation. It was but one of Lattimore's highly-influential writings which would enable him to claim the title of architect of the U.S. policy towards China, that resulted in the Chinese communist takeover. Owen Lattimore was described by the Senate Internal Security Sub-committee as "a conscious articulate instrument of the Soviet conspiracy".¹⁵ He was indicted on a charge of perjury. But his attorney managed to get four of the seven counts dismissed and the balance of the charges never came to trial because of the Justice Department's lack of action. Dr. Lattimore went to Outer Mongolia in 1961.¹⁶ State Department officials denied emphatically that he was going there as an official representative. But just four months after Lattimore's return from Outer Mongolia, the U.S. Government agreed to the admission of that communist satellite to the U.N. Organization.

Lauchlin Currie, now exposed as a communist agent, gave up his American citizenship after going south, possibly for his health. Currie went to South America, finally turning up in Columbia where he obtained a position in the Columbian government in charge of administering funds contributed by the United States taxpayers under the Alliance for Progress Program.¹⁷ Currie continued to serve his Kremlin superiors very well indeed but at least he and the other agents exposed were no longer operating within our government itself.

Most serious observers felt that only a position of the picture had been exposed. That the communist agents thus far uncovered were only a part of the vast network of Soviet spies that had penetrated our government. They called for the investigations to be continued but there were scoffers that rejected this idea. Some of the scoffers claimed that the investigations were only a witch hunt and there weren't really any communist spies in the government. Other scoffers admitted that there might have been a few infiltrators. But all of them had already been exposed and that further investigations would only injure innocent people. While still others claimed that communists were just people who believe in a different economic system and it didn't really matter if some communists were in positions of influence in our government. Their words varied somewhat but their basic demand was the same, "STOP THE INVESTIGATIONS!" "Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments," a U.S. Senate Report, released on July 30, 1953 was based on 3 years of intensive probing into the extent of communist penetration into our government. Here was an authoritative voice speaking and the conclusions of their investigation, on page 49, are chilling. Conclusion #1 stated: "The Soviet international organization has carried on a successful and important penetration of the United States Government and this penetration has not been fully exposed." Conclusion #2 stressed: "This penetration has extended from the lower ranks to top-level policy and operating positions in our Government." Conclusion #6: "In general, the Communists who infiltrated our Government worked behind the scenes—guiding research and preparing memoranda on which basic American policies were set, writing speeches for Cabinet officers, influencing congressional investigations, drafting laws, manipulating administrative reorganizations—always serving the interest of their Soviet superiors." Conclusion #12: then stated with damning finality: "Policies and programs laid down by members of this Soviet conspiracy are still in effect within our Government and constitute a continuing hazard to our national security." This official U.S. Senate Report went on to urge that additional investigations be conducted to expose the remaining conspirators.

Numerous investigations were held by Congressional committees on Communist penetration into many areas of American life. . . education, communications, movie industry, religion, labor organizations and others. But conspicuous by its absence is the lack of any additional investigations on subversion within the Government itself. This lack raises many questions and the implications of the answers are frightening indeed.

President Truman attempted to shut off the public exposure of subversives in Government before the first open hearings were held. President Truman, by his directive of March 13, 1948 appeared to effectively close the executive Department files to the Congressional committees who were even then investigating the Alger Hiss affair. His directive to all Executive Departments stated: "Any subpoena or demand or request for information, reports, or files . . . received from sources other than those persons in the executive branch of the Government who are entitled thereto by reason of their official duties, shall be respectfully declined, on the basis of this directive."¹⁸ Thus in a blatant example of the abuse of executive power President Truman moved to close all records in the Executive branch . . . even to duly-authorized committees of the Congress charged with the responsibility of helping to protect the American people from subversives within our government.

This action made exposure of the extent of penetration virtually impossible. And the Chambers-Hiss confrontation might have had an entirely different conclusion except for a little-known event that occurred shortly after President Truman's directive. Hiss had appeared before the House Committee and denied Chamber's charges. He was quite impressive in his denials and the committee was not certain who was lying—Hiss or Chambers. The pressure and the temptation was very great to just drop the matter. But at that point, John Peurifoy, Assistant Secretary of State in charge of Security, chose to place his country's welfare above any misguided sense of loyalty to the President or fellow State Department officials.

At great personal risk John Peurifoy removed the Alger Hiss security folder from its file in the State Department. At 1 a.m. in the morning he took the folder to then Representative Karl Mundt, acting chairman of the House Committee. Peurifoy allowed Mundt to view the Hiss file and see that the State Department had long been aware of the communist activities of Hiss but had taken no action against him. After the meeting, Peurifoy swore Mundt to secrecy as to how he had come to personally see the Hiss file and then Peurifoy returned the folder to its place in the files that had been closely by Presidential order. Representative Mundt was now certain who was lying and was able to assure his fellow members of the committee that Hiss was a communist agent. But he didn't reveal until after John Peurifoy's death how he had come to see the Hiss file.¹⁹

Secretary of State, Dean Acheson's statement "I do not intend to turn my back on Alger Hiss." is incredible. It came on the heels of Hiss' conviction for perjury and Acheson could not have been unaware of the truth about Hiss that was in his own State Department security files.

Dwight Eisenhower was elected to the Presidency in 1952. His campaign pledge to clean up the mess in Washington if elected, had given hope to many that the Congressional investigations, that had already exposed a portion of the network of communist agents in government, would begin again. On March 5, 1954, President Eisenhower sent a letter marked "Personal & Confidential" to all department heads, ordering them to shield their employees from Congressional Committees. This was to be done by having the department head appear before Congressional committees, instead of the employee, to answer questions concerning loyalty and security.²¹ The door to investigations into subversion within the Executive Department was then firmly slammed shut a few months later when by Presidential order, President Eisenhower ordered all files concerning personnel in the Executive Department closed to Congressional inquiries.²²

It was the actions of Presidents Truman and Eisenhower which effectively lowered the curtain and made it impossible for any effective investigations to be held in the area of Communist infiltration into our Government.

Either Presidents Kennedy or Johnson could have rescinded the earlier Presidential orders and directives that had closed the files, and thus permitted the truth to be pursued. But instead, they both seemed to accept as a guide the position urged by Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas in his private memorandum on how to deal with the problem of Communism during the cold war. In this now-famous memorandum he said: "Fundamentally, it is believed that the American People have little, if any, need to be 'alerted to the menace of the cold war'."²³ Senator Fulbright appeared to be saying, we are the all-wise rulers, and we don't need to explain our position to the peasants. Senator Fulbright went on to say . . . that during the cold-war, the ". . . principal problem of leadership will be, if it is not already, to restrain the desire of the people to hit the Communists with everything we've got,"²⁴ . . . Pride in victory, and frustration in restraint, during the Korean War, led to MacArthur's revolt and to McCarthyism."²⁵

No one can deny that General MacArthur had good reason to be frustrated. This outstanding American dedicated his entire life to defending our nation and our freedoms. His knowledge of military tactics was truly remarkable and his record of success

is to this day unequalled. But in Korea, General MacArthur found himself to be hampered not as severely by the shortages of manpower and supplies as by the restrictions on his military operations imposed by his political superiors. The no-win war he was forced to conduct in Korea tragically touched many thousands of American families. The question, for what purpose did these Americans die? is still being asked, for they were not permitted to win. The war in Korea has still not officially ended, and daily headlines remind us that Americans still man this outpost at the 38th parallel in Korea. General MacArthur shared with millions of other Americans, frustration over the Korean debacle. Senator Fulbright's use of the term McCarthyism is an example of the hatred those of his ilk still feel for the late Senator Joseph McCarthy. . . Senator McCarthy was certainly no saint, but few men in modern history have been attacked as viciously and as unfairly. To describe Senator McCarthy as frustrated would be an understatement of the greatest magnitude. During the Senate Committee hearings he held, every imaginable obstacle was constructed to prevent him from making public to the American people the information he must have known was locked away in Executive Department files.

"Interlock-locking Subversion in Government Departments" provides ample evidence to support Senator McCarthy's contention that there were un-exposed communist agents still in the Government. The following testimony given by Elizabeth Bentley to Committee Counsel Robert Morris reveals her first-hand knowledge of their existence.

Miss Bentley: I agree with him (Whittaker Chambers) that quite obviously there still are Communists in the Government, partially because it is an obvious thing and partially because I was told by one of my Soviet contacts about the existence of other groups in the Government. Mr. Morris: In other words, you knew there were espionage rings other than your own in the Government and you know they haven't been exposed. Miss Bentley: I know they haven't been exposed. I was not told who they are, but since they were not exposed, obviously they are still operating. Mr. Morris: You knew of two individual rings working under you? Miss Bentley: Two individual rings plus a collection of individuals I dealt with individually. Mr. Morris: One was the Silvermaster ring? Miss Bentley: That is correct. Mr. Morris: And the other? Miss Bentley: We called it the Perlo group. Mr. Morris: You had some indirect knowledge that Alger Hiss was operating in the Communist framework, did you not? Miss Bentley: Yes. One of the members of the Perlo group had at one time been taken out of that group by Mr. Hiss and turned over to the Russians, and I discovered that during the course of my talking to one member of the group. Mr. Morris: In other words, there was still a third group that you knew of that existed at that time. Miss Bentley: There was a third group that I knew of because of Mr. Hiss, and there was another group that was mentioned to me by my Soviet contact without identifying it further. Mr. Morris: That is still a fourth group. Miss Bentley: Yes. Mr. Morris: And you know, as a matter of fact, that neither one of these two groups, as far as you know, have been exposed as of this date? Miss Bentley: As far as I know, they haven't been exposed.²⁶

One can only shudder at the thought of what secrets these un-exposed communist agents might have relayed to their superiors or even more frightening is the thought that some United States government policies might have been influenced by or even based upon their opinions and recommendations.

The FBI is charged with the responsibility of collecting information about subversive elements in our nation. This excellent agency has an outstanding record of reliability, but it is an investigative agency only. FBI files could be bulging with information on communist spies in our government. Presidential action permitting congressional committees access to these files could permit this information to be made public, but the FBI has no independent authority to reveal its findings. FBI files on Alger Hiss contained 3 separate confirmations of his communist activ-

ities by 1945, even as he presided over the founding of the United Nations Organization.²⁷ But no action had been taken against him by officials of the Executive branch. It was the knowledge that public exposure of his subversive activities loomed on the horizon which made it imperative that he leave his influential government post.

The door to information about other spies in the government was closed and barred . . . by Presidential order. Only the President can rescind these orders and each day that passes makes it more imperative that he do so. Many years have passed since Alger Hiss and some of his fellow conspirators in our Government were exposed. But no more of the picture has been made public and those who escaped exposure must certainly be continuing their efforts to aid the Communist conspiracy. Only a portion of the network of conspirators in our Government was exposed and we have no way of knowing how extensive the rest of the network might be. But a question of almost equal importance is . . . how could Communist agents gain access to government positions in the first place.

The answer to this question can be found in Whittaker Chambers' remarkable book, "Witness." Chambers explains that he felt the need of having a government job. To continue in his own words: ". . . I instructed one of the apparatus men in Washington (George Silverman) to get me a job in the United States Government, where I knew he had placed other Communists. . . Almost overnight, I found myself employed by the National Research Project. I used the name Chambers. It had been a simple matter for the party to place me in the Government, since one of the national heads of the Research Project, George Silverman . . . and my immediate boss on the job were all members of the Communist Party".²⁸

Was it really as simple to infiltrate our government as Chambers claimed? Could his statement be an exaggeration or just an exceptional case of coreless screening of potential employees by the Executive Department of our government? The Department of Agriculture, not involved in military, diplomatic or other secret projects had minimum security requirements. It was particularly vulnerable and offered easy access. This is where Alger Hiss began . . . in fact where 6 of the 9 earlier-mentioned members of the Ware cell began their government careers.

The Senate Report explains what happened after the conspirators had gained employment in the government. "Almost all of the persons exposed by the evidence had some connection which could be documented with at least one — and generally several — other exposed persons. They used each other's names for reference on applications for Federal employment. They hired each other. They promoted each other. They raised each other's salaries. They transferred each other from bureau to bureau, from department to department, from congressional committee to congressional committee. They assigned each other to international missions. They vouched for each other's loyalty and protected each other when exposure threatened".²⁹ It was all quite neat and efficient, and there really wasn't any problem at all. Presidential action could remove the existing barriers and permit Congressional Committees access to the information locked away in the security files. This would enable the committees to determine how many of the unexposed conspirators in the Executive branch, referred to by the Senate Committee in 1953, are still on the job.

It is possible that the unexposed spies are still Communists, but no longer in the government. This would appear most unlikely, for a disciplined communist stays on his job as long as possible in order to continue his espionage and subversion. Perhaps the unexposed Communist agents have seen the light. Perhaps they have all discovered that Communism is no longer to their taste and suddenly become good and loyal Americans. If this were the case, just as did Chambers, Bentley and a few others, a considerable number of additional repented communist spies would have come forward to testify and attempt to undo some of the damage they had done.

The only logical conclusion possible is that there still are com-

munist spies within our Federal government. That their numbers have not decreased . . . but in all likelihood they have recruited additional conspirators and thus enlarged their ranks.

Those who value freedom should ponder the warning issued by Abraham Lincoln over a century ago. His words ring truer today than ever before in our nation's history: "Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force take a drink from the Ohio or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a trial of a thousand years. At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us it must spring up amongst us; it cannot come from abroad".³⁰ The people of this great nation go about their daily lives feeling secure in the belief that their national government is a bulwark, protecting their freedoms from any enemy that threatens. But an insidious enemy has penetrated and now lurks within. If freedom is to be preserved for future generations, the American people must face this reality and react accordingly.

Public exposure is what this enemy fears most. When such exposure threatens, they have generally abandoned their positions of influence and those who chose to face the exposure, were completely neutralized in the damage they could do.

The President of these United States, should he choose to do so, can by the simple stroke of his pen remove the barriers that have been erected and which enable the enemy within to remain concealed. Will he take that action? An overwhelming avalanche of letters, demanding that he do so, would probably get results. But it will take an avalanche of gigantic proportions for political figures generally choose to "play it safe" moving in response to the demands of the electors if the voice is loud enough. Are there enough truly-concerned Americans to create an avalanche of sufficient size? Let's begin with YOU—will you do your part while there is still time?

FOOTNOTES

1. "Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments," Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, July 30, 1953, Page 6.
2. Ibid., Page 6.
3. Ibid., Page 5.
4. Ibid., Page 5.
5. Ibid., Page 5.
6. Ibid., Page 6.
7. Ibid., Page 5.
8. Ibid., Page 6.
9. Ibid., Page 6.
10. "Hearings Regarding Communist Espionage In The United States Government" (HCUA), Pages 507-519.
11. Ibid., Page 511.
12. "Institute of Pacific Relations" Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, Part 2, Pages 521-526, 550-556.
13. "Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments," Page 30.
14. "Witness," Whittaker Chambers, Random House 1952, Page 342.
15. "Institute of Pacific Relations," Senate Report 2050, July 2, 1952, Page 224.
16. New York Times, March 20, 1961.
17. Chicago Tribune, as reprinted in Human Events, September 15, 1961, Page 619.
18. Federal Register, March 16, 1948, Page 1359.
19. "Seeds of Treason," Ralph de Toledano, Henry Regnery Co., Revised and Updated Great Debate Book, 1962, Page 158.
20. Acheson Press Conference, reported in Time Magazine, February 6, 1950, Page 11.
21. "Eisenhower, The Inside Story," Robert Donovan, Harper & Brothers, 1956, Pages 253-254.
22. "First Hand Report, The Story of the Eisenhower Administration," Sherman Adams, Pages 142-143.
23. Human Events, August 11, 1961, Page 510.
24. Ibid., Page 510.
25. Human Events, August 25, 1961, Page 565.
26. "Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments," Pages 3-4.
27. Ibid., Page 8.
28. "Witness," Page 40.
29. "Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments," Page 21.
30. "Abraham Lincoln—The Prairie Years," Carl Sandburg, Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc., 1926 Abridged Edition 1929, Page 130.

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